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X Econ 4 Cambodia
X Pers 3 (Prince)
SIHANOUK

FOREIGN REPORTS

CAMBODIA: *The End of US Aid*

★ At the political rally where he announced the severance of economic and military aid ties with the United States, Prince Norodom Sihanouk produced political prisoners who said they had been given American radio equipment by the CIA and US military in South Vietnam for use in aiding the Free Cambodia movement, a rebel group which seeks to overthrow him. The US has denied any knowledge as to the source of the broadcasts, but CIA activities being what they are in South Vietnam, this would be right up their alley.

The Cambodians are a fiercely nationalistic people but Prince Sihanouk is said to be reconciled to the idea that he must come to terms with the Chinese if his country wants to continue to exist with any semblance of neutrality; thus, he has struck up a friendship with them. This does not mean he is going to fall into their lap any more than he is in the West's. As for US aid, it has been running down for some time and the Prince has talked before of stopping it. US alliances with both Thailand and South Vietnam has made Sihanouk leery of Washington. Cambodia has fought with the Thai and Vietnamese for centuries. While both Thailand and South Vietnam disclaim any interest in her territories at present, border incidents still occur and in 1958 the South Vietnamese representative to Cambodia was implicated in a plot to overthrow Sihanouk. So he has every reason to suspect trouble from that quarter now.

Sihanouk was the first to argue for an international conference which could assure Laos its neutrality, but by the time the US came around to this view, the non-Communist forces had received such large setbacks that he felt the usefulness of a treaty had diminished. He believes that the US has been making the same mistakes in South Vietnam as the French did, trying to fight Communist guerrillas with military rather than political means. Last year, at an international conference on Laos, Sihanouk suggested setting up a buffer zone of Laos and Cambodia whose neutrality could then be guaranteed. France and the Communist powers replied favorably. The US turned down the idea. All Cambodia wants is to protect its neutrality from East and West interference.